

Parsons Nursery, Fernow Experimental
Forest Bankhouse
South side of U.S. Route 219, .25 miles
southeast of Parsons
Parsons Vicinity
Tucker County
West Virginia

HABS No. WV-237-N

HABS
WVA
47-PARSON,
IN-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HABS
WVA
47-PARS.V,
IN-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

HABS No. WV-237-N
PARSONS NURSERY, Fernow Experimental Forest Bunkhouse

Location: South side of U. S. Route 219, .25 miles
southeast of Parsons, Tucker County, West
Virginia

USGS Parsons Quadrangle, Universal Transverse
Mercator Coordinates: 17.614362.4327398

Present Owner: Monongahela National Forest
Department of Agriculture
Sycamore Street, Box 1548
Elkins, WV 26241

Last Occupant: Parsons Timber and Watershed Laboratory
Forest Service
Department of Agriculture

Last Use: Bunkhouse

Significance: The Fernow Experimental Forest bunkhouse,
built in 1934 by members of Camp Parsons
Civilian Conservation Corps, was one of the
original administrative buildings for the
Fernow Experimental Forest Branch Station, a
part of the Appalachian Forest Experimental
Station, headquartered in Ashville, NC. The
station was founded in 1934; named in honor
of the famed forester Bernard Fernow. The
staff of the Experimental Forest studied
watershed and timber management on the nearby
Elk Lick Run watershed. This is the only
experimental forest in Monongahela National
Forest. For an overview of Parsons Nursery,
see HABS No. WV-237.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1934, is derived from Mary Gaudineer's photograph showing the bunkhouse under construction in summer, 1934 (see historic photograph WV-237-M-6).
2. Architect: Neither architect nor landscape architect are known.
3. Original and present owner: Monongahela National Forest.
4. Builder: The Fernow Experimental Forest bunkhouse was constructed by members of Civilian Conservation Corps Camp Parsons for the Fernow Experimental Station Branch of the Appalachian Forest Experimental Station.
5. Original Plans: None.
6. Alterations and additions: The original siding was replaced by white vinyl siding in 1986.

B. Historical Context:

The Fernow Experimental Forest Branch Station was founded as an outdoor laboratory in 1934. Members of Civilian Conservation Corps Camp Parsons constructed four buildings along the bank of the Black Fork River to house on-site researchers and administrators. The housing and administrative site is on the west side of the Parsons Nursery Bottom, on the southern part of the Long Tract, purchased in 1933. The Fernow Experimental Forest bunkhouse housed part-time and visiting researchers and staff of the Station. They were responsible for administering the development and maintenance of the Elk Lick watershed, the site of the experimental forest. Most of the actual research planning and analysis of results took place in Ashville, NC, at the Appalachian Forest Experimental Station.

In 1941, the four Fernow Experimental Forest Station buildings were boarded up as research programming was suspended because of World War II. The bunkhouse was again occupied when research was reactivated in 1948. The bunkhouse served persons as a temporary home while they conducted research at the Elk Lick watershed. It housed visiting officials and summer interns. Until the office was constructed in 1958, it often served as a temporary office for Fernow Experimental Forest research projects.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: The Fernow Experimental Forest bunkhouse is one of a complex of Forest Service buildings constructed in a simple, rustic, gable-roofed, style. Unlike its neighboring Parsons Nursery buildings, it originally had horizontal, painted, lap siding on the first floor and vertical, painted siding on the gables. This building uses native materials available in Monongahela National Forest, such as chestnut paneling and it follows the local convention of exterior diagonal wind-brace sheathing with herringbone, centered joints under the siding.
2. Condition of fabric: Structurally sound and in use.

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: A one-story, rectangular plan, this building is 32'-0" x 22'-8". It has three front bays and two side bays. It has no attic.
2. Foundation: 8" poured concrete with crawl space. There are five grille-covered crawl space vents, 8" x 1'-4", one on each elevation, with two on the east.
3. Walls: Exterior walls have vinyl horizontal siding, 5" exposure, which replaced the original, painted, horizontal, wood siding in 1986. There are 3-1/2" vinyl corner boards. The foundation-roof height at the corner is 10'-0". The foundation-roof height at the peak of the main roof is 16'-8".
4. Structural system: The wood frame is not exposed except at the eave overhangs. The roof has "2x6" rafters on 20" centers with "1x6" tongue-and-groove roof sheathing.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: Front stoop extends 19" beyond the eave overhang. It is now boxed with plywood and unfinished. It and the rear entry way once had a decorative "4x4" header, removed in 1986. The on grade stoop is 8'-9" x 6' poured concrete.
6. Chimneys: The interior chimney is 3'x 1'-4". It has red wire-cut brick with a cap of soldier-laid brick with stacked half brick corners. It has galvanized, step flashing. There is a 4" diameter, exterior, galvanized pipe flue for the furnace.

7. Openings

- a. Doorways and doors: Exterior doorway jambs have new trim 2" flat molded trim, mitered at the corners. The front door is pine, three lights over two vertical panels, 6'-7" tall. The rear door is pine, four lights over one molded panel, 6'-8" tall.
 - b. Windows and shutters: There are two sizes of window, 5'-3" x 2' with eight lights in the living room and bunk room and 3'-5" x 2' with six lights in the kitchen and bath. They are used alone and in pairs. All are casement windows. Each window has new, wooden trim with a 2" flat molded, mitered architrave, and the original a raised, 2" sill stop. The new trim is unpainted. There are single hung aluminum screens/storm sash on all windows. The original board-and-batten, green shutters with a cut-out of a pine tree have been removed.
8. Roof: The gable roof has asbestos shingles that have replaced the original sawn cedar shingles. It has "2x6" exposed rafter ends clipped to meet a plain, new "2x8" fascia. On each gable end the "2x8" rake board is notched so that three trim elements could extend. The "4x4" wall plate, the "4x4" ridge piece, and a "4x4" extension mid-way between wall plate and ridge piece have been removed. The south eaves have an aluminum gutter. Eave corners have unpainted and unfinished plywood boxed corners. The gable end overhang is 15", including the rake board; the eave overhang is 18", including the fascia. There is a triangular, pressed galvanized louver roof vent at each gable end, approximately 20" tall.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The rectangular building has a large front room with kitchen and bath behind. The west end of the building is a bunk room.
2. Stairways: None.
3. Flooring: The main room and bunk room have 2-1/4" oak flooring. The kitchen and bath have modern vinyl flooring.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: As a part of the conscious rustic design, interiors are unstained, unvarnished native chestnut. Walls and ceiling in the main room, kitchen, and bunk room are random width vertical chestnut beveled boards with 1/2" bead. All paneled rooms have a

2" beveled chestnut crown molding and a quarter round molding as the baseboards. The bathroom has smooth plaster above painted ceramic tiles 4'-4" on each wall.

5. Openings:

- a. Doors: All door jambs are 3/4" beaded chestnut trim. Doors are brown stained, pine, two-panel doors, 6'-8".
- b. Windows: All windows have no jamb but a 3/4" bead molding. The sill is a 1" ogee bed molding. Trim and sill are unstained, unvarnished chestnut; sash is unfinished pine.

6. Decorative features and trim: The wire-cut red brick fireplace in the main room has a rollock course of brick below the chestnut mantle shelf. The kitchen has original chestnut board-and-batten cabinet doors made of vertical, unbeaded boards. There is mitered, surface mounted trim, 1-1/2" wide on each door, to make a "panel." The cabinets are the same as those in the Fernow Experimental Forest residence.

7. Hardware: The front door hardware is plain, brass-plated iron with three ball-pinned hinges and a plain, brass-plated iron knob plate with bevelled edge. Interior doors have black-painted knob plates 7" x 2-1/4". Interior doors have two ball-pinned hinges. The kitchen/main room door has an iron swinging door hardware. Windows have two brass-plated hinges with ball pins. Window latches are a turn latch on a plain plate and a stamped, hook plate closure.

8. Mechanical equipment: There is a new forced-air furnace. The fireplace has an original heatilator with cast iron decorative grilles, the same as those in the Fernow Experimental Forest residence. All plumbing is new. The kitchen sink, two bathroom sinks and kitchen and bath chrome faucets are original. Ceiling lighting is the original frosted, hung globes with interior bulbs. There are original iron wall sconces with cast rope and bead detail. The original bath sconces are light green ceramic.

9. Original furnishings: The bunk room has its four original freestanding, chestnut wardrobes, 7' x 2'-11" x 1'-9". There is one for each sleeping area. They are made of the same material as the room paneling.

D. Site: The building faces northwest, 327°30' . It survives

on its original site, together with most of the original nursery structures and all the original Fernow Experimental Forest structures (see WV-237-7 and WV-237-N-5). The front stoop has a concrete extension to each side, 4'-9" on the east, 5'-2" on the west. The rear door has a concrete step, 4'-10" x 3'2", with one step. Ten feet south of the bunkhouse, along the nursery lane, 12'-8" east of the building is a red pine (*Pinus resinosa*).

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural drawings: None.
- B. Historic views: Forest Service photographs, Monongahela National Forest Office, Elkins, WV; Mary Gaudineer photograph copies, Monongahela National Forest, Elkins, WV.
- C. Interviews: Dovie Fansler, 6-10-1989, Elkins, WV, Parsons Timber and Watershed Laboratory secretary, 1964-1988; John King, 9-5-1989, Wanakena, NY, silviculture supervisor, CCC Camp Parsons, 1933-42; Dorsey Knight, 10-24-1989, Parsons, WV, Parsons Nursery employee, 1932-1951.
- D. McKim, C. R., Monongahela National Forest History, unpublished manuscript, November, 1970.

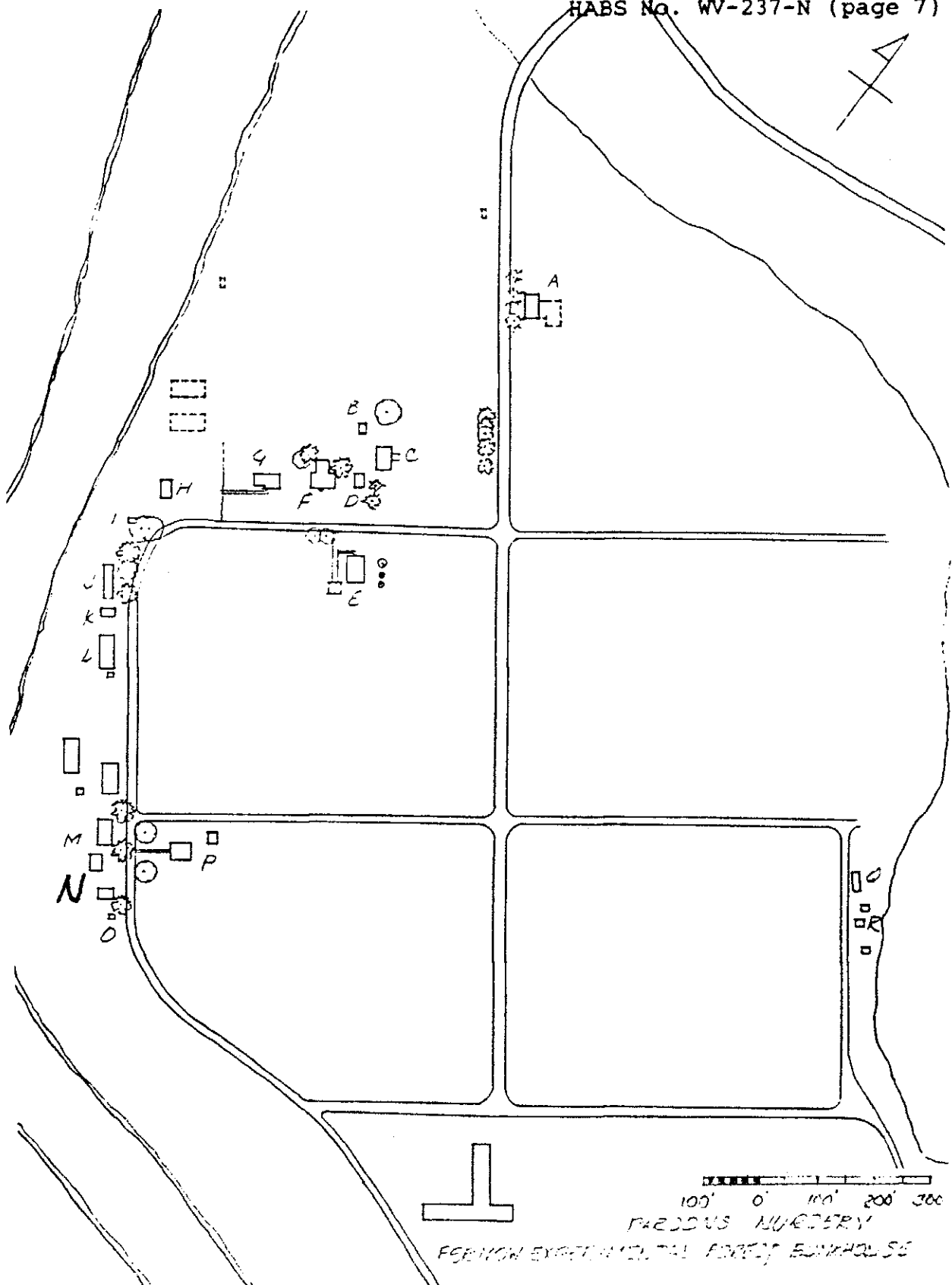
Trimble, George R., Jr., A History of the Fernow Experimental Forest and the Parsons Timber and Watershed Laboratory, Upper Darby, Pa.: Northeast Forest Experimental Station, 1977.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

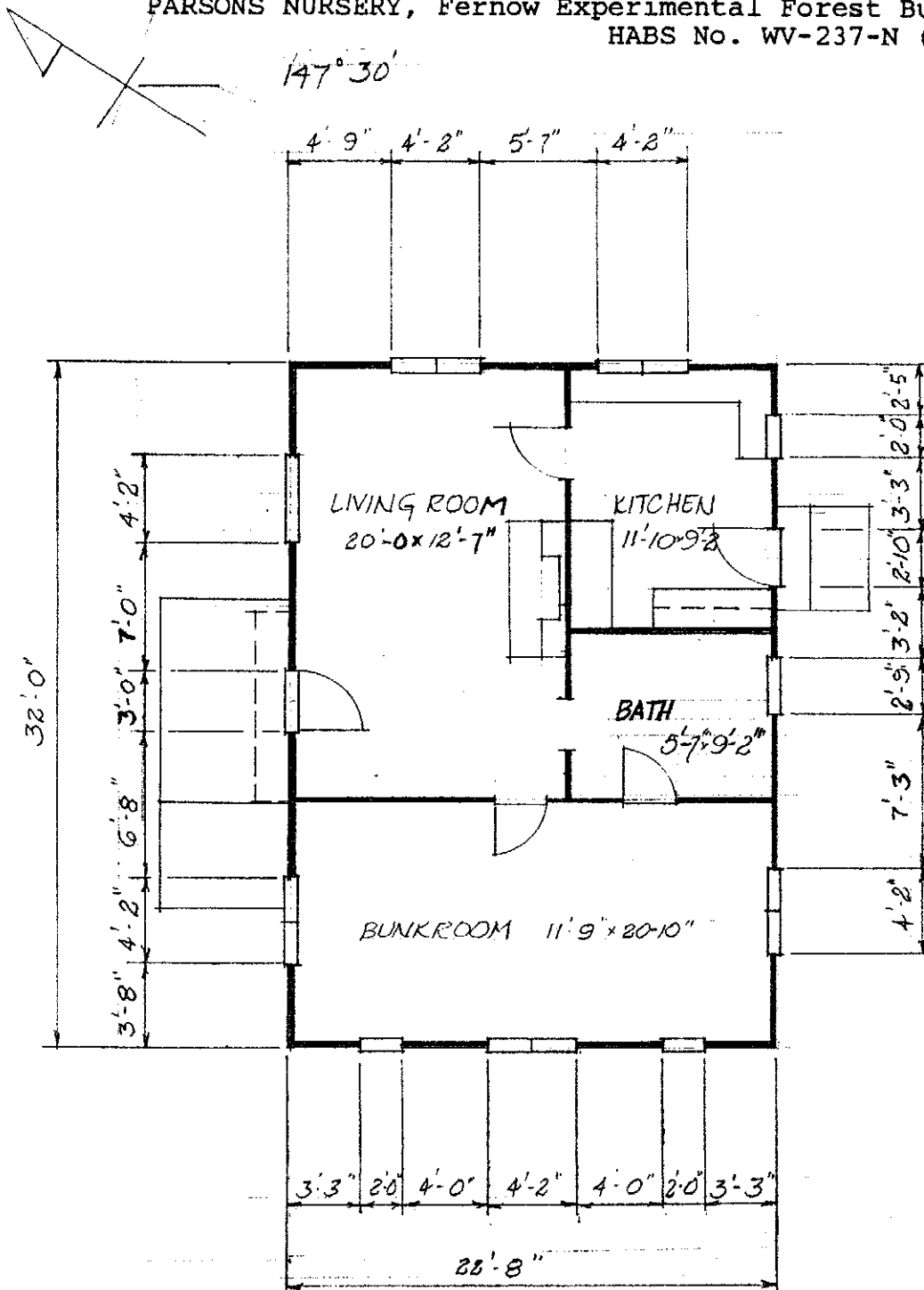
The architectural and historical documentation of the Parsons Nursery site has been undertaken to fulfill a memorandum of agreement signed by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the West Virginia SHPO and the USDA Forest Service as part of requirements under regulation 36 CFR 800 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Recording has taken place prior to substantial modification and/or removal of structures damaged by a flood in November, 1985.

This documentation has been prepared by: Rebecca M. Rogers, Preservation Consultant, 44 Audubon Road, Youngstown, Ohio, under contract to Monongahela National Forest, April-November, 1989.

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